

Protecting Communities, Assisting Families



DIRECTING CHANGE

The Strategic Plan
for
Adult Corrections
and
Family Justice Services
1998 - 2001

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Ministry of Attorney General
Corrections Branch



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

The Honourable Ujjal Dosanjh, Q.C.
Attorney General

Message from the Attorney General

As you know, our Ministry has embarked on important and necessary strategic reforms of British Columbia's justice system. Last year I travelled with senior staff across the province to listen to the concerns of Ministry staff and other British Columbians about the justice system. These consultations, together with ideas and input from all branches of the Ministry, have contributed to the new directions for justice reform that are now underway.

I am aware that the Corrections Branch has been actively refocusing its resources and programs within the context of justice reform. I know that this strategic plan, *Directing Change*, represents a major commitment to improving the delivery of justice and protecting public safety.

Not only is this strategic plan consistent with Ministry-wide principles and priorities for reform, it demonstrates an energetic resolve to get the job done. In the face of limited resources and increasing demands, the Corrections Branch has exercised leadership and initiative by implementing sweeping changes in organization and programming.

I trust that by remaining innovative and responsive to human needs, the Corrections Branch will continue to make progress in fostering positive long-term changes in the services it provides. This strategic plan is an important step in that direction.

Ujjal Dosanjh, Q.C.
Attorney General

Message from the Assistant Deputy Minister

I am pleased to present *Directing Change: The Strategic Plan for Adult Corrections and Family Justice Services (1998 - 2001)*. This is the new strategic plan that outlines the challenges which face the Corrections Branch and directs us on how available resources will be used to achieve our goals and fulfil our mission.

As the strategic plan suggests, the goals of our organization are *protecting communities, and assisting families*, and this is reflected in our new mission statement: "*To protect the community through offender management, offender control and conflict resolution.*"

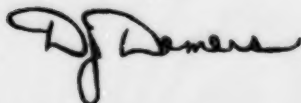
The strategic plan offers a convincing perspective on why we are actively changing the way correctional services are delivered. For example, our Branch continues to respond to dramatically increasing demands for correctional and family justice services within existing resources. These pressing demands are highlighted in *Directing Change*, but more importantly, the strategic plan identifies how we will address them into the next century.

During the last year, the workload for many of us was affected by the restructuring of the Branch and its programs. As a result of our efforts, however, we have already made significant gains in realizing the vision that is introduced in this strategic plan. *Directing Change* builds on the offender management tools that we are developing to assess offenders and channel effective program resources to those posing the greatest risk to the community. It also acknowledges the steps we have taken to reorganize into functional divisions and focus resources on a specialized and integrated offender management model.

In addition to our new strategy for criminal justice, *Directing Change* reflects the significant reforms undertaken to assist families with modest means in resolving conflict on issues related to child custody, access and financial support. The Branch mandate is to encourage non-litigated settlements between separating couples and ensure child-centred resolutions to parental conflicts.

I am confident that this strategic plan will inspire us to make effective decisions which will have a positive impact on the future of our organization and corrections in British Columbia. It clarifies what we do, who we serve, where we are going, and how we plan to get there. I look forward to working with staff to accomplish this course of action.

Yours truly,



D.J. Demers
Assistant Deputy Minister

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DIRECTING CHANGE - Strategic Reforms of B.C.'s Justice System

In April 1997, the Attorney General released the document, "Strategic Reforms Of British Columbia's Justice System," in part to share his vision for "a justice system that is both tough and effective." Central to the reforms is the belief in "a restorative justice system that gives communities a primary role in developing policies and programs." In both criminal and civil matters, restorative justice encourages consensual approaches to resolve disputes and restore healthy relationships.

The first two goals of criminal justice reform are to "employ the full weight of the traditional system to protect the public from high-risk, violent offenders," and "ensure offenders are held accountable for their actions and ensure victims' voices are heard in the criminal process."

The primary strategy in achieving public protection is to "focus court and correctional resources on high-risk, violent offenders through enhanced use of risk assessment tools," and "tailor rehabilitation programs to address those factors that give rise to an offender's criminal behaviour." The Attorney General has identified the need to focus resources on offenders who pose the greatest risk, and provide effective rehabilitative programs.

The Attorney General's goals for family justice reform include the need to "promote timely and just resolution of civil/family disputes that are affordable for individuals and the system as a whole," and "ensure that women and children receive the financial support to which they are entitled."

As an integral component of the justice system, the B.C. Corrections Branch provides appropriate levels of intervention, control and supervision required by that system. The Branch is responsible for the operation of adult correctional facilities for offenders who are sentenced to imprisonment for less than two years and remanded to custody pending a court decision. It also operates community correctional programs, and delivers family justice services.

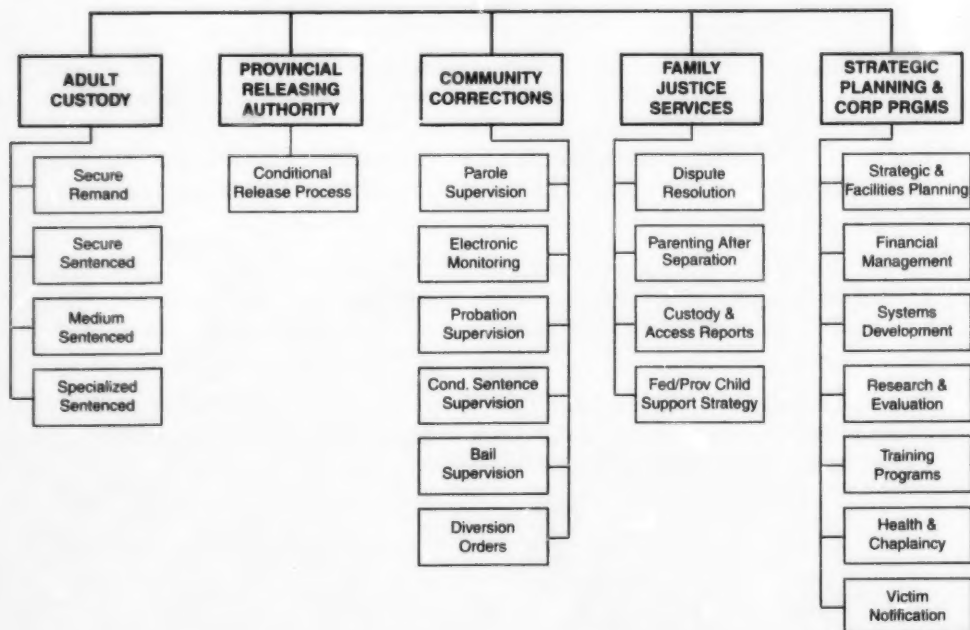
As a key contributor to the Attorney General's strategic reforms, the Corrections Branch undertook a major reorganization. A new vision of the Branch's mandate was established, a new mission statement was defined, and strategic initiatives were identified.

The new mission statement of the Corrections Branch is ... **TO PROTECT THE COMMUNITY THROUGH OFFENDER MANAGEMENT, OFFENDER CONTROL AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION.**

DIRECTING CHANGE - Corrections Branch Reorganization

In 1997, youth correctional services were transferred from the Corrections Branch to the new Ministry for Children and Families. In addition to the Attorney General's justice reform strategies, this provided the Corrections Branch with an opportunity to focus on adult offenders in criminal matters, while enabling more distinct Family Justice Services. In the spring of 1997, the Branch reorganized its regional management model into a functional structure with five divisions, each with province-wide responsibilities.

The Adult Custody Division provides custodial supervision for adults sentenced to incarceration and those remanded to custody. The Community Corrections Division supervises adults in the community who are on bail supervision, probation and conditional sentences, and those conditionally released from custody. The Provincial Releasing Authority is responsible for policies and processes related to the release of offenders from custody, on parole and other forms of conditional release. The Family Justice Services Division offers a variety of services such as dispute resolution, parenting after separation programs, and custody and access reports. The Strategic Planning and Corporate Programs Division provides support, advice and coordination to the Branch as a whole. The Provincial Directors of the divisions and the Assistant Deputy Minister constitute the Senior Management Committee.



DIRECTING CHANGE - The Evolution of Correctional Programs

Historic Emphasis on Alternatives to Custody

Provincial responsibility for imprisonment dates back to the mid-1800s. Formal supervision of offenders in the community began in 1946, when the *Probation Act* provided this sentencing alternative. Community caseloads grew slowly until 1962, when formal probation training began and caseloads increased substantially thereafter. In fiscal 1973/74, the probation caseload — the only community program at that time — averaged 8,270 while the jail count averaged 1,820.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Corrections Branch increased its emphasis on alternatives to incarceration. It introduced bail supervision in 1974, and the use of temporary absences increased substantially during the late 1970s. Provincial parole was initiated in 1980, and electronic monitoring was first offered in 1989. By 1991/92, the combined community caseload (bail supervision, probation, parole, and electronic monitoring) averaged 13,685, and the institutional count averaged 1,810. During the 18 years between 1973/74 and 1991/92, the caseload supervised in the community increased by 65 per cent, while the institutional count did not change.

Recent Emphasis on Coping with Growth

The five years from 1991/92 through 1996/97 was a period of one of the most dramatic increases in both community caseloads and institutional counts. By 1996/97, the combined community caseload had increased an additional 58 per cent, averaging 21,635. The institutional count increased 24 per cent, averaging 2,250. Given that there was no corresponding increase in resources to manage these additional demands, the Corrections Branch installed double-bunks in institutions and increased caseloads in the community. These responses however, are not sustainable, and new strategies are required.



DIRECTING CHANGE – THE EXPANDING

More People, More Often

The use of corrections as a means of controlling crime has expanded. The number of adults in B.C. being managed in institutions and community programs increased dramatically during the first six years of the 1990s.

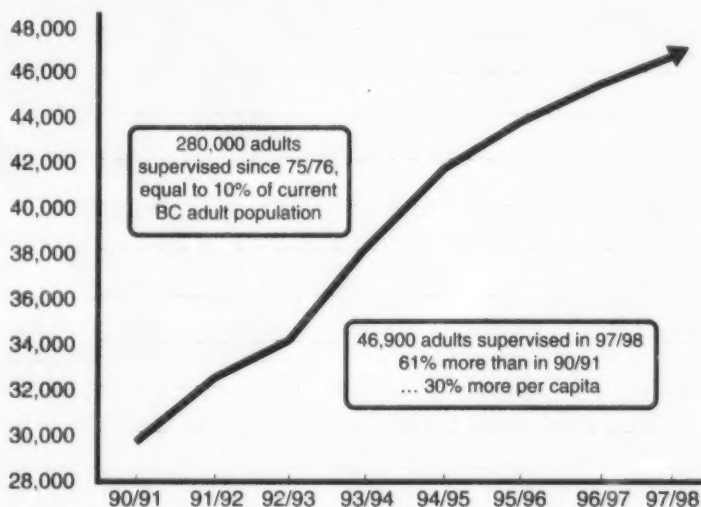
Changing Nature of Offenders

An increased emphasis of the criminal justice system on sex offenders and spousal assault offenders has resulted in a significant increase in supervised caseloads. More than one half of community correctional resources are now devoted to the management of these groups.

The age and complexity of offenders are also increasing. Fifteen years ago, almost half of all admissions to correctional supervision or custody were 18 to 24-year olds. Now almost two-thirds are in the 25 to 45-year-old age group.

A greater proportion of these offenders have histories of violence, and have experienced longer involvement in crime and corrections. In addition, there is an increasing use of detention for mentally disordered offenders.

INCREASING NUMBER OF ADULTS SUPERVISED BY CORRECTIONS



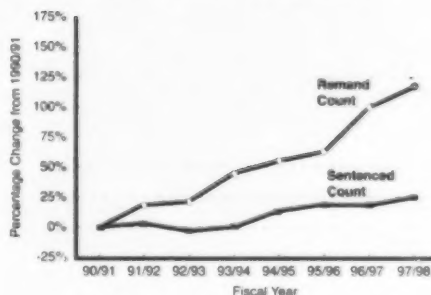
ROLE OF CORRECTIONS

Shift in Program Emphasis

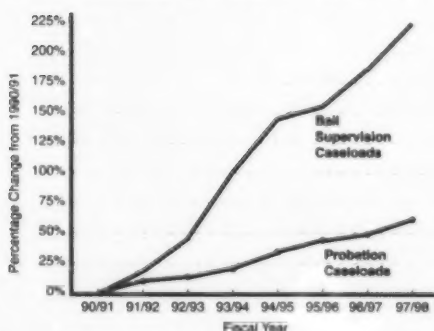
Since 1990/91:

- The pretrial jail count grew by 120 percent; approximately two-thirds of secure jail space is occupied by those awaiting trial.
- The pretrial community caseload — bail supervision — grew by 225 percent. More than twice as many persons who were recommended for charge are now placed under this form of supervision by the courts.
- Probation caseloads grew by 60 percent. An additional 5,500 adult offenders are now supervised in the community.
- The number of offenders serving jail sentences has grown at approximately the same rate as the general population of the province.

Cumulative Growth Rates of Adult Jail Counts – Remand & Sentenced



Cumulative Growth Rates of Adult Community Caseloads – Bail & Probation



These changes in demands have been occurring during a period of continued budget restraint and increasing public expectations.

Through the implementation of integrated offender management, the Corrections Branch will ensure that limited resources are focused on offenders posing the greatest risk to the community.



DIRECTING CHANGE — INTEGRATED

In response to the significant growth in demand and shift in program emphasis, the Corrections Branch is implementing an integrated approach to the management of its programs and offenders.

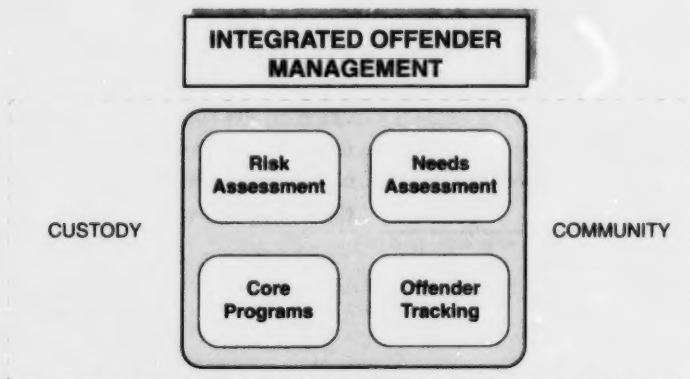
This began with the restructuring of the organization into functional divisions. It continues with the development of enhanced case management practices and tools to improve offender monitoring, reduce recidivism, and increase efficiency.

In the short term, community protection is provided by the Corrections Branch containing offenders in custody or supervising them in the community. This imposes external controls on offenders, and reduces their opportunity to do harm.

Risk/Needs Assessments

Risk/needs assessments, together with ongoing case management, are the instruments used to identify the offender's likelihood of re-offending, the appropriate custody or supervision level, the factors contributing to criminal conduct, and a focused offender management plan. Treatment, or reducing the risk of recidivism through core programs, is more effective when matched with the offender's risk level.

Risk assessment will enable Corrections to focus limited resources on higher risk offenders.



OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

Core Programs

In the long term, it is necessary to develop changes in serious offenders that will endure after their involvement with the Corrections Branch ends.

Core programs are designed to promote long-term changes in the thinking, skills and lifestyles of serious offenders that are known to contribute to crime.

To ensure these programs are effective, they will be delivered in a standard and complementary manner in both community and institutional settings.

The Corrections Branch will deliver seven core programs:

- **Motivational Program**, to help offenders recognize that change is possible and worthwhile, and how to overcome barriers to change.
- **Cognitive Skills Program**, to provide skills related to crime avoidance, such as analyzing problems, considering options and consequences, and making decisions.
- **Family Violence Program**, to identify the features of healthy and unhealthy relationships, and the precursors to violence, and develop plans to prevent relapse.
- **Substance Abuse Program**, to help offenders identify the nature, causes and consequences of addiction, and outline the path to recovery.
- **Anger Management Program**, to help offenders recognize differences between anger and violence, analyze sources of anger, and identify non-violent resolutions.
- **Employment/Housing/Financial Management Program**, to help offenders prepare for the job market, obtain accommodation, and manage income.
- **Sex Offender Program**, to teach offenders about sexuality, the impact of abuse on victims, the cycle of offending, and relapse prevention.

Integrated Offender Management

A new offender tracking system is being developed that consolidates institutional and community information, and risk assessments on all high-risk offenders. It will also monitor the progress of offenders through core programs.

DIRECTING CHANGE - Strategic Initiatives

The paramount objective of the criminal justice system is community protection. To meet this goal while managing significant growth in demand and shifts in programs, the Corrections Branch will employ the following strategies during the next three years:



Offender management will be based on current and accurate assessment of the offender's risk to the community.



Resources will be focused on offenders who present the greatest risk to the community.



Core programs that are effective in supporting change in criminal-related behaviour will be provided in institutional and community settings.



Offenders will be managed by Adult Custody, Conditional Release, and Community Corrections through an integrated case management framework.



The community, through the B.C. Board of Parole, will continue to make independent release decisions.



Victims will be informed of the status of specific offenders through formal notification.



Institutional and community resources will be adjusted to meet changing demands according to established standards, and the risk and needs of offenders.



All major programs will be monitored and evaluated for effectiveness.

DIRECTING CHANGE - Divisional Missions & Objectives

To contribute to the strategic initiatives of the Corrections Branch, its divisions undertake the following missions to achieve specific objectives.

Adult Custody Division

"The mission of the Adult Custody Division is to ensure public safety by providing appropriate, safe management and control for all prisoners and by directing behavioural change through work and core programs."

- OBJECTIVES**
- Implement the new service delivery and organizational structure of the Corrections Branch.
 - Provide services based on risk/needs principles.
 - Develop and implement core programs.
 - Ensure linkage with Community Corrections and Conditional Release Divisions based on common core programming and integrated case management.
 - Improve communications with all stakeholders.
 - Provide a work place environment free of harassment and respectful of others.

Community Corrections Division

"Community Corrections assesses and manages the risk posed by adult offenders."

- OBJECTIVES**
- Implement the new service delivery and organizational structure of the Corrections Branch.
 - Provide services based on risk/needs principles.
 - Develop and implement core programs.
 - Promote staff development, expertise, and involvement in program/policy development.
 - Develop more effective relationships with justice system partners and local communities.

Provincial Releasing Authority

"The Provincial Releasing Authority is a component of the criminal justice system that contributes to a safe society through reasoned conditional releasing decisions made by an independent B.C. Board of Parole. Their decisions are based on the protection of the community, the interests of the victim, and the positive reintegration of the offender into the community.

OBJECTIVES

- Implement the new service delivery and organizational structure of the Corrections Branch.
- Foster excellence in community re-entry decision-making practices.
- Promote public confidence and understanding regarding conditional release.
- Ensure participants in the re-entry process are fully informed.
- Be a pro-active partner in the criminal justice system.

Strategic Planning & Corporate Programs Division

"To provide support and expertise to the Assistant Deputy Minister and the operating divisions; coordinate projects involving more than one operating division; and coordinate inter-Branch and inter-Ministerial initiatives."

OBJECTIVES

- Implement the new service delivery and organizational structure of the Corrections Branch.
- Coordinate the development and implementation of core programs.
- Develop the long-term strategic focus of the Corrections Branch, including the Accommodation and Capital Plans.
- Ensure the quality of working relationships is maximized with other branches of the Ministry, other ministries and bodies.
- Provide accurate, informative, and timely management information.

DIRECTING CHANGE - Family Justice Services

Evolution of Distinct Family Justice Services

In 1972, the Ministry of Attorney General assumed responsibility for the administration of family courts from municipalities, and subsequently established Family Court Counsellors at locations throughout the province. Staff in this role also acted as Probation Officers.

Increasing demand during the 1980s resulted in the establishment of a few specialized Family Justice Counsellor offices, separate from probation functions. In 1992, separation of these duties was recommended in the report *Breaking Up Is Hard To Do*.

In 1996, the decision was made to formally separate the duties of Family Justice Counsellors from Probation Officers. In April 1997, the Family Justice Services Division became a distinct entity within the Corrections Branch. At that time, Family Justice Centres were established in thirty-one locations across the province.

Strategies of Family Justice Services

The goal of Family Justice Services is the timely and just resolution of family/marital disputes outside of the traditional court system. The following strategies are key to fulfilling this goal:

-  A network of Family Justice Centres will be established province-wide.
-  Resources will be focused on dispute resolution, and on assisting clients of modest means.
-  Parenting after separation programs will be implemented province-wide.

Mission & Objectives of Family Justice Services

"The mission of Family Justice Services Division is to promote the timely and just resolution of family/marital disputes outside of the traditional court system."

- Reallocate resources primarily to dispute resolution services and target those services primarily to parents of modest means.
- Reorganize the delivery of custody and access report services.
- Implement parenting after separation programs throughout the province.
- Implement the federal/provincial child support strategy.